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“What does mobility mean to you?” asked Jessica Robinson, executive director of the Michigan Mobility Institute, at our AmeriCorps VISTA Training in early May.
Dear Readers:

On April 1, a national Census Day of Action was held to mark the one-year countdown to Census 2020, when our nation will embark on the Herculean task of counting every single resident. Data from Census 2020 will be used to determine how billions of dollars in federal funding will be allocated to support states and communities across the nation.

The census goes digital in 2020. Individual online forms will be the primary method for collecting census information. While the Census Counts Campaign and census advocates will be working in communities to help Michigan residents adapt to the change, going online poses significant challenges to getting a complete count of all Michigan residents, especially the hard-to-count populations.

There is strength in numbers. Obtaining a complete count is critical for the future well-being of our state and our communities. More people counted means more money and more power for Michigan residents, including our representation in Washington, D.C.

For every Michigan resident not counted, the state stands to lose an estimated $1,800 per year. That's $18,000 per person over 10 years. Multiply that amount by about 30 percent of Michigan's population that was not counted in 2010, and it adds up to a loss of more than $97 million in federal funding, plus the loss of two congressional seats in D.C. In 2020, Michigan is at risk of losing yet another congressional seat.

That’s a lot to lose.

Census data is used to determine the allocation of federal funding to support state and local services and the people who use them. These include crucial services for kids, such as K-12 education, nutrition assistance, Medicaid, Title I and Special Education Grants, Foster Care and Child Care Grants, Section 8 Vouchers and Head Start/Early Start.
Census data is also used to determine federal funding for upgrades to Michigan’s crumbling infrastructure and pothole-ridden roads.

As a result of the 2010 census, Michigan received more than $14 billion in federal funding.

Children are especially hard to count. They may live with grandparents or, if in a shared custody arrangement, they may move between homes. A primary place of residence may not have been identified, which leaves these children vulnerable to not being counted.

If we do not get an accurate count of Michigan’s kids, hundreds will miss out on vital services. In addition, our schools will be in danger of not receiving adequate federal funding to help rebuild their national competitive rankings.

Focus groups conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau show that people are concerned about the confidentiality of their personal information: the security of it in this age of Big Data breaches and how the federal government will use it.

In addition, the inclusion of the citizenship question continues to be controversial and problematic. While it is still under legal review, the fact that it exists may discourage immigrants from participating in the census, which can lead to an incomplete count.

By law, census data can be used for only one purpose: counting the residents of the U.S. The type of demographic information collected has not changed much over the years, and typically the census collects less information than most people reveal on their social media profiles.

We need every Michiganian to spread the word about Census 2020 and why getting a complete count will help our state and our communities thrive.

When everyone is counted, we all win.

Sincerely,

Donna Murray-Brown
President & CEO
Michigan Nonprofit Association

Hassan Jaber
CEO
ACCESS
“What does mobility mean to you?” asked Jessica Robinson, executive director of the Michigan Mobility Institute, at our AmeriCorps VISTA Training in early May. This was the fifth and final content expert training that the Pathways to Employment AmeriCorps VISTA Program executed during this program cycle in order to expose VISTA members to new ideas and initiatives in the fields of work force development and college access. These trainings act as professional development and networking opportunities for our members, inspire them to think of unique solutions to systemic problems, and provide resources that can be utilized in the communities they serve.

Mobility in the Motor City

Zekiye Salman
MNA AmeriCorps VISTA Leader

In response to Jessica’s question, some VISTA members answered that mobility meant simply getting from Point A to Point B; for others in the room, it meant a lack of health restrictions. For most people, mobility meant freedom, progress, or access.

This vision of mobility has traditionally been associated with open roads, fresh air, and opportunity, especially in Michigan, long known for its manufacturing and automotive industries. Here, a perfect combination of natural resources, railroads and waterways for transporting goods, and ingenuity catalyzed economic growth throughout the state, inspiring many people to cross state lines or oceans to settle in booming cities like Detroit, Lansing, and Flint. However, the industries associated with mobility and our vision of mobility are changing with Michigan’s crumbling infrastructure, the growing fear of automation’s impact on the work force, and the immediate threat of climate change, even if what mobility means to us as a society has remained static.

The Detroit Mobility Lab is fighting to preserve Michigan’s relevance in the mobility industry and ensuring that Michigan’s talent and infrastructure are prepared for the changes happening in the industry. The organization has set out to understand the economic impact of changing trends: self-driving cars, electric cars, shared services, and connected vehicles. Not only will
these advances in technology create a projected 100,000 new jobs in the next 10 years (six times the projected number of graduates in these fields), but they will also fundamentally change numerous adjacent jobs throughout our work force, as well as the skills necessary to be successful in those jobs, from delivery drivers to mechanics.

In response, the Detroit Mobility Lab has launched the Michigan Mobility Institute, which the founders describe as a “brick and mortar educational institute with the mission of educating professional tradespeople within artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity, and other fields vital to ensuring Detroit’s relevance as a global center for future mobility.” In doing so, they’re helping people in Michigan’s automotive and manufacturing work force meet the demands of the new knowledge economy.

This information is vital to the work our VISTA members do across the state. Many of our members serve Michigan residents by improving their literacy rates, helping them build their employability skills, and supporting them as they gain certifications and trainings that our economic market currently demands. But this work also needs to be accompanied by a proactive envisioning of what the market will be and what our industries will look like. Exposing our VISTA members to this work will help them prepare their host sites for the future needs of those they serve and equip our Workforce Development VISTA members with the skills and framework they need to critically think about the future, both how to get Michigan to the future we want and how to creatively address obstacles along the way.

In addition to launching the brick-and-mortar institute, the organization is in the process of establishing a Master of Mobility degree. This degree is projected to encompass all of the skills needed for the next generation of engineers, including electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, coding, business modeling, and data tracking. The hope is this new degree will inspire and attract talent to the field and to Michigan by shifting the narrative and brand of one of the state’s most iconic industries, expanding possibilities for our people and our state.

For both our Workforce Development and College Access VISTA members, our May training offered a glimpse into Michigan’s mobility industries. But this training and the Pathways to Employment AmeriCorps VISTA program don’t just teach members about Michigan’s future, they also serve to actualize that future through the development of our state’s next generation of leaders. Trainings like these provide our VISTA members with knowledge of the challenges and opportunities our state faces and give members the skills needed to confront our changing world head-on — this year and beyond.

1(2019, January 15) “Jessica Robinson joins Michigan Mobility Institute as first Executive Director, announces plans to develop Master of Mobility degree.” Detroit Mobility Lab. Retrieved from http://detroitmobilitylab.org/
Zekiye Salman serves as one of MNA’s AmeriCorps VISTA Leaders and has served at MNA for three years. Spending her time operating in many different fields within her service, such as communications, event planning, human resources and more, Zekiye said she advises someone in service to never pass up an opportunity to try something new or learn a new skill.

“Take advantage of having a role where you are able to experiment, learn, and grow,” she says. “A lot of people think, ‘I don’t know how to do that so I don’t want that responsibility,’ rather than thinking, ‘I don’t know how to do that so I want to figure it out.’ And I think that mindset will dictate, in part, how much you enjoy your work and the quality of outputs you produce.”

Outside of her service, Zekiye is a passionate volunteer and advocate for multiple organizations involved in social justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and sex education. She can also be found reading or doing yoga. The book that has influenced her the most, she says, is “Living a Feminist Life,” by Sara Ahmed, which is academic stylistically and focuses on diversity and what that really means.

“How people who do diversity work are often looked at as a problem, because they are exposing problems that already exist,” she says. “And it interrogates this fetishism with happiness, exploring how happiness has really come to mean ‘easy’ rather than ‘fulfilling’ or ‘worthwhile’ and questioning why that should be the goal. I’m definitely committed to doing this work, so having that experience validated, feeling inspired to continue with that work despite the struggles, and being in solidarity with and connected to this larger movement has been instrumental in shaping how I see myself, my work, and my community.”

The most important thing Zekiye has learned in the past five years, she says, is that everyone is doing their best and no one has all the answers. “I feel like this stops a lot of people from taking action,” she says, “but if you can accept that we’re all doing what we can, then it becomes a lot easier to start implementing ideas, hammer out issues, and commit to troubleshooting along the way. A great, well-implemented project beats a perfect idea that never moves off paper.”
A Technological Perspective on Improving the Way Your Organization Works

By Adam King, Technology Director, MNA Technology Services

I began working in the nonprofit sector in 2004, helping nonprofits navigate technology though planning, education, and technical support. Since that time, I have led over 100 nonprofits through technical assessments, from a single volunteer employee working from their home to an 80-person organization operating at five locations.

I recently read through a technology plan I wrote for a small nonprofit back in the mid 2000s. It included recommendations such as these: stop using @yahoo.com email addresses, set up a VPN to access files at the main office, upgrade your DSL internet speeds, replace your tape backup with USB hard drives, and install the latest updates to the donor database. Very typical recommendations for this time.

The technology we used had been evolving slowly from the 1990s, and internet speeds were only increasing in small increments from year to year from the early days of dial-up.

What's Changed
What would I recommend today if I did the same tech plan? The cloud! The cloud has evolved dramatically since
the early part of the 2000s. With a massive increase in internet broadband speeds, remote access to files, data backup, and donor database can all be running in the cloud with a high level of confidence. Leveraging the cloud has allowed nonprofits to simplify their infrastructure and streamline their operations. Building out an infrastructure to host complex systems would have been a large capital expense 15 years ago. Now cloud-based systems are typically paid for as a recurring monthly expense, often with a nonprofit discount available.

What’s the Same
Reading through that old tech plan, I was also reminded how much has stayed the same. I still encounter nonprofits using outdated technology. Just a few months ago I worked with a small nonprofit to get their staff off of AOL email addresses and migrated to Microsoft Office 365. At another organization, we moved file shares from the front-desk computer to a cloud-based system with integrated backup and secure access from anywhere. No more rotating USB backup drives and emailing files back and forth.

Technology is sometimes still an afterthought for organizations that are so mission-driven they do not take the time to pause, plan, budget, and implement new technology. My biggest piece of advice is to work with a trusted technology consultant to map out how technology can aid your organization in the work it does. Focusing on the biggest needs and making wise investments in technology can be affordable and can improve the way the organization works.

What’s Next?
Cloud technology will continue to evolve and become ever more prevalent in how we get our work done. However, cybersecurity is going to be our new focus. All of the systems and data we work on are susceptible to threats. It is no longer the case that hackers are only focused on big companies. Every person’s identity is worth money on the dark web. Moreover, imagine what a hacker could glean if they got access to your CFO’s email account. Each tech assessment we do now has a heavy focus on securing the organization’s systems and data. From implementing advanced firewalls and email filtering to simple things like keeping your antivirus software up to date, it is important to explore each aspect of your data and secure it with the best options available. As with any aspect of technology, there are smart ways to invest scarce dollars and ensure your environment is safe.

Say Goodbye to Your Technology Troubles…
…and Hello to the Tech Experts Who Specialize in Nonprofit Solutions.

Take advantage of all that technology can do for your nonprofit with MNA’s Tech Support and Consulting Services.

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- Monthly onsite tech support visit from your consultant
- Unlimited, toll-free help desk support and troubleshooting
- Proactive computer and server maintenance and monitoring
- Annual tech assessment and strategic planning to ensure stable and secure systems

Get the Service and Support You Need
- Cloud implementation
- Tech assessments
- Network analysis and troubleshooting
- PC repair, tune-up, and virus removal
- Customized staff training
- Microsoft Office 365 and Google Apps implementation

Leave Your IT to Us!
Contact us today to arrange your free consultation.
Call 734-777-0208 | Email adam@mnaonline.org | Visit www.mnaonline.org
Why am I here? What is my purpose? These are questions we’ve all asked ourselves at some point or another. These were questions pondered by Rita Fields when she was 17 and homeless. “I spent a day panhandling and got $1.25 in various coins after an eight-hour shift of sorts,” she says. “I remember not understanding why I was even there.”

After running away from a life filled with pain and suffering, she became homeless at 17 and worked hard to push past hardships and challenges that would eventually shape the life she lives today. “I had to make time to be intentional living my life. I wanted to live my life on purpose and made deliberate changes in order to do certain things,” says Fields, who will be the keynote speaker for this year’s Talent Strategy Summit, organized by MNA and scheduled for Aug. 27 in Royal Oak.

Six years ago, Fields gave up her “big job with a big title” and quit her life in the corporate world after becoming dissatisfied with the life she realized she was living. While she is no stranger to pain, coming to this realization wasn’t easy. “I had stayed up for nearly 24 hours straight working on a big project where all eyes were on me. I had a migraine, I was hungry. I leaned down to get cheese and crackers that had fallen into the floor of my car.”

That’s when the impact happened — a large truck sideswiped her car and completely shattered her side mirror. With glass shards covering her face and neck, she refused medical care...
and went straight to her office. “I went to work, and people thought I was wearing glitter all over my face and neck, and that’s when I realized something was wrong. I didn’t want to live a life where I was putting my life at risk over a job.”

Fast forward to now, when Fields is a dual CEO of both 313 Industries, a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machining and milling corporation, and Copper Phoenix Consulting, LLC, where she offers expertise on talent and operations management. She is also on the faculty in the school of management at University of Michigan, in health care administration at Central Michigan University, and a dissertation adviser in the Ph.D. program in Organizational Development at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Her “labor of love,” as she affectionately refers to teaching, is an area where Fields truly feels she makes an impact. “I love my students, and they love me,” she says. “When I teach, I show up. Whenever I have the opportunity to water someone’s garden, I do it.”

When asked about what concerns her and gives her hope, she mentions the millennial generation because of the fear and crippling anxiety she observes in her students and some younger people. “Sometimes something happens that you don’t see coming, and I don’t imagine I’d be far in my life if I were focused on being anxious all the time,” she says. “There’s no way I would be able to reap the rewards I experience today if I hadn’t taken the risks I did then.”

Managing teaching at multiple universities as well as running two of her own businesses with 10 email addresses might sound overly ambitious to some, but not to Fields. “My days are all over the place,” she says, “but what I’ve learned is I really benefit from intellectual diversity in my work, and I have that in spades. I like having to switch gears, and I do it very well.”

She has what she calls her “formula for professional satisfaction,” which is to not voluntarily spend time with annoying people. “The ability to pick and choose meaningful work is what motivates me and I do that deliberately,” she says. “I am very intentional when I connect with and work with or for other people.”

Fields acknowledges that she has a personal “justice league” — a handful of trusted people in her life whom she connects with when something really big is happening or she needs advice. “I know they love me and will be honest with me. I like to keep my justice league close,” says Fields.

While Fields may sound like a real-life superhero, she, like all of us, has rough days. “Every year I commit to wake up in a different country on my birthday. On rough days, I always get to imagine where my next trip is going to be.”

Fields has been to six continents and plans to check the seventh, Antarctica, off of her list soon. She recently got back from Cuba and will spend her birthday in Amsterdam this summer. She says some of the nicest people she’s met were in Cambodia.

“Cambodia is a really heartbreaking place in many ways, but the people are some of the nicest people I’ve met in the entire world,” she says. “They’re so grateful and aware of how grateful they are.”

Fields is the epitome of gratitude, and you can hear it in her voice when she speaks. And investing in your authentic self is something that she believes in. “You’re doing a disservice to the world when you try to be like someone else,” she says.

The Talent Strategy Summit at which Fields will be speaking is a premier MNA event for nonprofit leaders who have an influence on employees’ performance in their organization. “Your people is where your success is,” says Fields.

Join us for this event to discuss and learn how to work with and motivate people to thrive in inclusive and equitable ways within your organization. For more information, visit mnaonline.org.
In Washington D.C., a bill that would lessen the tax burden for nonprofits has bipartisan support and needs your support.

The Lessen Impediments from Taxes (LIFT) for Charities Act (HR 1545 / S 632) specifically targets the provision from the TCJA (Tax Cuts and Jobs Act) that requires nonprofits to pay a 21-percent unrelated business income tax (UBIT) on transportation fringe benefits offered to employees.

The IRS released limited guidance in December that includes a multi-step formula for allocating expenses related to employer parking lots and other guidelines. Limited penalty relief was offered to nonprofits that offered qualified transportation benefits in 2018 but did not make estimated payments, but only if they had not been required to file a Form 990-T in the tax year ending Dec. 31, 2017.

With the “any reasonable method” standard presented alongside the guidance—which remained open for comment through Feb. 22—the confusion is far from extinguished. The IRS acknowledged the administrative burden of the UBIT modifications, and a survey commissioned by Independent Sector estimated the cost of taxing transportation benefits will add an average of $12,000 to a nonprofit’s operating budget. Ready or not, for those nonprofits whose fiscal year aligns with the calendar year, May 15 was the deadline for taxes assessed for 2018.

In addition to the transportation benefit changes, the TCJA also increased the tax liability of nonprofit organizations by altering accounting rules on separate unrelated business income (UBI) streams. While considering expenses incurred by an organization as UBI and making that UBI subject to taxation is new, the overall concept of UBIT is familiar to many nonprofits. Unrelated business income—that which is a trade or business, is regularly carried on, and is not substantially related to furthering the exempt purpose of the organization—has helped sustain nonprofits for decades.

In the past, however, business lines could be calculated in aggregate to minimize tax liability. Now IRS Code Section 512(a)(6) requires each trade or business line to be calculated separately. This “silo-ing” of income streams captures the maximum tax per line and limits the possibility to offset losses from one program or activity with the income from another program or activity. The Independent Sector survey anticipates this part of the tax package to divert an average

A Refresher on Unrelated Income Tax

By Jamie Lewis, MNA Finance & Database Manager

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of about $15,000 per year per nonprofit organization away from mission-centered programming and activity.

In considering just two provisions of the TCJA, the setback to our sector is clear. The estimated financial impact underlies forecasts about the social impact of these changes and affects decision-making at nonprofits of all sizes and structures and driven by every individual mission. So what comes next?

Work with your finance and accounting team, or reach out if you’ve never needed this level of support. We know that several MNA business members who specialize in accounting and auditing are emerging as leaders. We encourage you to stay engaged in national advocacy efforts. Reach out to MNA staff to be sure you received our Public Policy Action Alerts. And tell members of Congress to choose #missionnottaxes by repealing the unrelated business income tax increases enacted by the TCJA.

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A premier event for nonprofit leaders who have an influence on employees’ performance in their organization. Discuss and learn how to work with and motivate people to thrive in inclusive and equitable ways. Leaders will gain insight on ways to shape and adapt their organization structure and culture to maximize staff performance. **Register today** for the third annual nonprofit Talent Strategy Summit. This premier event is a great opportunity to learn and share strategies to recruit, develop, and retain diverse talent. Attendees can expect to be part of high level discussions and gain immediate practical leadership skills.

**m.n.a.**

Michigan Nonprofit Association

**TUESDAY | AUGUST 27, 2019**

9:00 AM - 3:30 PM | DETROIT ZOO
Who We Are: Jamie Lewis

By Sarah-Grace Battles
MNA Communications Manager

Jamie Lewis is the Finance and Database Manager at MNA, spending her time at work not only managing our databases and finances, but developing processes to make the work we do at MNA run more smoothly, knocking down silos and being the truest definition of a Jill of all trades. Her favorite part of her job is that her position is very task-oriented, which, she says, “allows me to set and achieve goals that support MNA and our members every day.”

Outside of work, Jamie spends her time remodeling a turn-of-the-century farmhouse with her husband and volunteering with and being a super-fan of the many activities her youngest teenage boy is involved with, including the Mason High School Drumline, the Tractor Technicians Robotics Team, and Mason Boy Scout Troop #141. Out of necessity and to honor her oldest son, Jamie also spends time supporting autism advocacy efforts around the state. She and her family are also MSU football fans (Go Green!) and enjoy spending time with their close-knit friend group.

When asked about her favorite memory during her time so far at MNA, Jamie mentions the time she dropped a 5-gallon jug of water on the floor of the office while trying to change the jug of the water cooler. “Seriously, it broke, and water went everywhere!” she says. “But I did learn that day how willing my colleagues were to jump in and help with a disaster, and I learned that even when I was embarrassed and my humanness was on full display that I would survive. I am now only allowed to change the water bottle if there is no one else available.”

The most important thing Jamie has learned in the past five years, she says, is “the only thing that is truly in my control is my reaction to the things and the people around me. Calm is a superpower.”
Managing the Workplace from an HR Perspective

Beckie Hawes-Baggett
MNA Director of Operations

The human resources climate in Michigan has had many changes in the past few months, as lots of employment-related legislative changes were proposed, appealed, and approved for the state of Michigan. Below are some recent HR changes that will have a lasting impact on the nonprofit sector.

Legalized recreational use of marijuana
On Nov. 6, Michigan voters approved the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act (Michigan Proposal 18-1), which legalized the recreational use and possession of marijuana for persons 21 years of age and older. MI Proposal 18-1 DOES NOT:

■ Require an employer to permit or accommodate conduct otherwise allowed by the act in any workplace and/or on an employer’s property.

■ Prohibit an employer from disciplining an employee for a workplace drug policy violation or for working while under the influence of marijuana.

■ Prevent an employer from refusing to hire, discharge, discipline, or otherwise take adverse employment actions against a person with respect to hiring, tenure, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of an employee’s violation of a workplace drug policy or because the employee was working under the influence of marijuana.

Organizations should adhere to this new law or consult an HR attorney on HR-related matters regarding this law.

2019 minimum wage increase
On Dec. 13, legislation signed by former Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder established a new state minimum wage for non-tipped and tipped employees. Under this new law, employers must pay non-tipped employees $9.45 per hour. The law took effect on March 29 this year.

Paid Medical Leave Act
The Paid Medical Leave Act (Public Act 369 of 2018) was signed into law by Snyder in December. This law went into effect for all eligible employers throughout Michigan on March 29. Employers with 50 or more employees must provide paid medical leave to all eligible employees for personal or family health needs, as well as for purposes related to domestic violence and sexual assault. The law specifies the conditions for employees to accrue and use paid medical leave, posting requirements, and remedies and sanctions for violations. Additionally, the law specifies that employees may accrue up to a maximum of 40 hours of paid sick leave. There is no allowance for unpaid sick leave; all 40 hours accrued must be paid. The approved concepts of what is considered “sick time” include:
An employee requiring mental or physical care or treatment, with physical care or treatment including care for sexual assault or domestic violence.

An employee's family member(s) requiring physical or mental care, with physical care or treatment including care for sexual assault or domestic violence.

An employee being required to meet at a child’s school or place of care related to health or disability.

An employee's child’s place of care or school closes.

If an employer’s policies require employees to submit a “sick note” from a doctor, the employer is required to pay any out-of-pocket expenses related to obtaining this note.

All Michigan employers must retain a minimum of three years of documentation of an employee’s hours worked and sick time taken.

Organizations should adhere to this new law or consult an HR attorney on HR-related matters regarding this law.
AmeriCorps Leader Reflects on Three Years of National Service

Dylan Davids
MNA AmeriCorps VISTA Leader

In 2016, the Corporation for National and Community Service celebrated a special milestone: one million individuals committing to serve with AmeriCorps since 1994, which is when the program began. I still remember this event vividly. It occurred during my first year of service with an environmental AmeriCorps program in Massachusetts, AmeriCorps Cape Cod. Our cohort was crammed into a basement conference room at the county courthouse to watch a planned ceremony at which NASA hosted AmeriCorps members across the country in celebration of the milestone (afterwards we received a very informative and very scary presentation on tick safety). While I may not have been that lucky one-millionth member, the experience grounded me in the community of national service, a critically under-advertised option for Americans.

I have to admit, my initial decision to serve in AmeriCorps did not come out of some lofty altruistic aspiration. I had just graduated from college with a degree in a field I did not want to pursue and was looking for something — anything — I could do that aligned with my personal interests. But that initial year of service instilled in me a fierce ethic of service that will never fade.

As AmeriCorps members, we are told that we do not work, we serve, and that is something that has stuck with me. I do not think I will ever be happy in a career that I see as just work. I need something more. This effect AmeriCorps has had on me is one of the most important impacts of the program. By immersing Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community service, it teaches us to aspire to more and to want to fight the problems AmeriCorps members tackle: poverty, environmental degradation, economic inequity, disaster recovery, and so much more. I am definitely not serving for the paycheck!

As an AmeriCorps VISTA Leader serving with the Michigan Nonprofit Association, I get to see firsthand all of the awesome work occurring around the state in fighting poverty. VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is older than AmeriCorps. Initially started as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty, it predates AmeriCorps by a couple of decades.
All VISTA projects must have an anti-poverty focus. MNA’s program accomplishes this through the double lenses of College Access and Success & Workforce Development, placing 30 VISTA members with MNA members throughout the state doing that critical work.

VISTA members do not directly serve clients. Instead, we focus on capacity building, laying the groundwork for nonprofits and schools by constructing volunteer pipelines, writing curricula, finding funding streams, developing sustainable programs, and more. For example, we have a VISTA member in the Upper Peninsula serving with the Mackinac Economic Alliance to bring year-round employment opportunities to residents in an area where much of the work is seasonal and tourism-oriented. We also have a VISTA member serving with Atlantic Impact, planning experiential learning opportunities and field trips for students in Detroit who may not otherwise have them. These are just two quick snapshots of what our VISTA members are doing for their communities. Their support is critical in building programs that provide the necessary support to help people climb out of poverty into sustainable, fulfilling work.

My role in all this is as a peer mentor, providing our VISTA members with opportunities for professional development and support in navigating the myriad situations that arise over the course of a year of service. It is a perfect fit for me. As someone who has had their life completely changed through AmeriCorps service, I now have the chance to help others along that path of service and self-discovery.

Each year more than 75,000 Americans commit to AmeriCorps service, some to give back to their community, some as a gap year between high school and college, and others to gain the skills they need to make a career shift. All are transformed by the experience. I hope that national service continues to grow as an option for everyone in this country, because it truly does have something to offer to everyone. Three years ago I was unsure in life, not confident about my path forward and unclear about where my passion lay. Today, I feel confident and prepared to continue serving my community, in whatever form that occurs next for me.
Who We Are: Dylan Davids

Dylan Davids serves as one of MNA’s AmeriCorps VISTA Leaders. His favorite part of the job, he says, is the chance to see the amazing work being done across the state by organizations that are hosting one of the VISTA members in the MNA program. “It has allowed me to learn a lot about the nonprofit landscape of Michigan as well as issues particular to different communities.”

The books that have influenced him the most, he says, are the “Calvin and Hobbes” comic anthology books. “They influenced me a lot as a child, and I still go back and read through them on occasion. I think the comic really helped spark my intellectual curiosity and helped make me into the person I am today.” He also says that the one person he would pick to interview would be Bill Watterson, the creator of the “Calvin and Hobbes” comic strips.

In his free time Dylan watches “Game of Thrones,” plays video games and enjoys trivia. “If it is a stereotypical ‘nerd’ thing, I am probably into it,” he says.

Dylan’s advice to someone interested or involved in service is to spend time focusing on networking and making meaningful connections because you never know what opportunities those connections could generate.

When asked about the most important thing he has learned in the last five years, he says that the education or degree you have shouldn’t dictate your life path. “I graduated with a degree in Media Arts & Information and a specialization in Video Game Design and have no real desire to do anything related to those things and have still managed to feel successful and happy.”

By Sarah-Grace Battles
MNA Communications Manager
Census Hub Profiles in the Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign

By Nellie Tsai, MNA Community & Civic Engagement Director

- Heart of West Michigan United Way, Census Hub for Kent County
- Community Foundation of Marquette County, Census Hub for the Upper Peninsula (all 15 counties)

The Census 2020 Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign has 13 regional hubs throughout the state to support the get-out-the-count fieldwork at a grassroots level. Among their many functions, census hubs develop plans specific to regional service areas in order to reach historically undercounted populations and help administer mini-grants.

It was important for the Community Foundation of Marquette County (CFMC) to get involved in the campaign because of the undercount that occurred in the Upper Peninsula in the 2010 census. Six Upper Peninsula counties were among those with the 10 largest population declines by percentage from 2000-2009, with Ontonagon County having the largest decline.

“By providing leadership to address a potential census undercount that would most certainly impact future state and federal funding, we hope to improve or at least maintain the quality of life for the residents of the Upper Peninsula,” says Gail Anthony, CEO of the Community Foundation of Marquette County. “This is the primary reason our community foundation signed on to be a hub so early, because we know this has real consequences for our residents.”

Geographically, the U.P. makes up one-third of Michigan’s landmass, yet it is home to only 3 percent of the state’s population. To reach the people and communities of this vast region, it is
necessary to know these small towns and reservations, and doing this right takes an incredible amount of outreach and relationship building.

To that end, CFMC has partnered with a capacity-building organization, Grow and Lead Community Youth Development. GLCYD’s service area covers the entire U.P., and the organization has relationships with many of the trusted nonprofits and partners in many of the census tracts that are estimated to have had undercounts.

“We need to have a fair and accurate count for our residents in the Upper Peninsula because it comes down to resources and representation,” says Victoria Leonhardt, an associate at GLCYD. “I’m excited to be a part of the effort that is building partnerships with local nonprofits and tribal leaders to reach our most remote residents.”

The Heart of West Michigan United Way (HWMUW) got its start as a census hub with the same sense of purpose. “Our community needs to know the importance of being involved with the census and how it would be a loss to the community if they weren’t involved,” says Shannon Gardner, Vice President of Community Impact for HWMUW.

The common narrative that is shared about Kent County is usually centered on economic development and job creation; it is not often mentioned that 37 percent of households in the county struggle to get their basic needs met. This segment includes the 28 percent of Kent County households that include working people but still struggle paycheck to paycheck, referred to as ALICE: Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed. Knowing this, the HWMUW has done presentations in various neighborhoods across the county.

“These information sessions have allowed us to experience the energy of the neighborhoods and have even introduced us to communities we weren’t aware of in our own backyards,” Gardner says. “Grand Rapids has a community of Bhutanese refugees who were resettled in the greater Grand Rapids area, starting in about 2008. These are the types of partnerships and relationships that will be critical for success.”

The HWMUW is also working closely with the city of Grand Rapids and coordinating its efforts with other county leaders. “There’s a real sense of community spirit — we’re all focused on a common goal together,” Gardner says.
Below is a basic framework for collaboration. As a leader, knowing and recognizing the stages of collaboration can be key to advancing your important work.

Before you begin, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, organizations will likely go through some of these stages several times in establishing the group but also in implementing the work. It’s also common in long-term relationships that these stages will “recycle” as circumstances and needs change. Second, groups may not go through the stages in order or spend a set amount of time on each. Sometimes the ease of moving through these stages changes between the period of forming the relationships and the period of executing the work. Third and finally, these stages usually occur organically and unconsciously, so directly discussing the four stages of collaboration may not be useful to team members. Leaders should be aware of what might be happening and may be able to help the process along by asking questions such as “What’s going on here?” and “What issues are occurring in the relationship?”

Here are the four stages of collaboration:

1. **FORMING**
   - Spending a lot of time reviewing previous meetings and catching up.
   - Engaging in more socializing and learning about each organization.
   - Deciding nothing after convening the meeting.
   - **Helpful interaction:** Facilitating getting familiar with each other and the process.

2. **STORMING**
   - Constantly feeling the need to assert oneself over another.
   - Locking horns over decisions and appearing to not hear one another.
   - Not making decisions or not following up on them.

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**Word to the Wise Collaboration**

By Sarah Pinder, MNA Engagement Director

You don’t have to be in the nonprofit sector long, before you hear about the concept of collaboration. For some people it is an overused buzzword, for others a grant proposal requirement, and for yet others it provokes memories of tedious group projects in school. Once you have processed your immediate reaction to this word, I encourage you to consider collaboration as an effective management technique that can help maximize resources and program effectiveness.
Helpful interaction: Facilitating a process that allows for providing feedback and accommodating concerns.

NORMING

- Treating one another’s ideas with respect.
- When a conflict or disagreement erupts, finding a way as a team to resolve the issue without becoming focused on personality or emotional issues.
- Making decisions by consensus after debate.
- **Helpful interaction:** Acknowledging and enjoying your progress.

PEFORMING

- Getting right down to business.
- Following one another’s thought processes and eagerly joining in brainstorming and sharing of new ideas, regardless of who originated them. Ego is not involved.
- Making decisions easily and getting tasks completed as planned.
- Achieving success in all problem-solving and decision-making.
- **Helpful interaction:** Returning again and again to what is working.

For more information on these stages of collaboration and other ideas for working together, check out the Michigan Nonprofit Management Manual, available for purchase at www.mnaonline.org

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**m.n.a.**

Michigan Nonprofit Association
330 Marshall Street, Suite 200
Lansing, MI 48912
What We’re Reading:

Summer Edition

Americanah
► By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

A novel on race and identity, Americanah follows a young couple, Ifemelu and Obinze, after they leave Nigeria, detailing how their racialized experiences impact their relationships to themselves and others.

The Immortalists
► By Chloe Benjamin

The Immortalists follows the lives of the four Gold children after they have their fortunes told and their death dates unveiled. It’s a story of family and fate that seamlessly addresses a variety of social ills and the unique, yet shared struggles each of us face when living out our lives.

Where the Crawdads Sing
► By Delia Owens

This historical novel that takes place from the 1950s to the 1970s is about 10-year-old Kya after she’s been abandoned by her family in the quiet town of Barkley Cove, North Carolina. Those who know her and love her and those who have shunned the “Marsh Girl” immediately suspect her of the murder of a handsome boy in town.

Kindred
► By Octavia E. Butler

In this novel, a black woman living in contemporary America is repeatedly pulled back in time to the antebellum South to protect the white son of a plantation owner. The novel explores power dynamics, family bonds, and the past’s impact on the present through her time jumps and their impact on her relationships.
The Power
► By Naomi Alderman

When women start developing the power to generate an electric current capable of causing pain and death, it disrupts the established world order. Covering this historic period of disruption but with an introduction and conclusion set in a female-dominated present, The Power exposes the oppression inherent in social hierarchies and the ways that these hierarchies can be fallaciously framed as part of the natural order.

Station Eleven
► By Emily St. John Mandel

Years after a majority of the world’s population is decimated by the Georgia Flu, a group of traveling artists makes its way through the Great Lakes Region to spread hope through performance while uncovering the ways the pandemic impacted and continues to influence people and relationships.

The Great Alone
► By Kristin Hannah

This novel of historical fiction tells the story of a family in crisis led by a father who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam and takes his family to the Alaskan wilderness to live off the grid. Thirteen-year-old daughter Leni is desperate to belong and must grow up quickly on the last frontier. Trigger warning: There are some strong scenes of domestic abuse and violence that occur.

Born a Crime
► By Trevor Noah

The Daily Show’s host recounts his childhood in South Africa during the era of apartheid, when his existence evidenced his parents’ miscegenation: a crime punishable by five years in prison.
The Boys in the Boat

By Daniel James Brown

This book tells the story of the University of Washington’s 1936 eight-person crew team and their epic quest for an Olympic gold medal. Brown uses the team members’ own diaries and journals, photos, and memories. This story truly epitomizes beating the odds in the depths of the Great Depression and showing the world the meaning of grit and success.

Bad Blood

By John Carreyou

This nonfiction book focuses on Theranos founder and CEO Elizabeth Holmes, a Stanford dropout who was widely seen as the female version of Steve Jobs. The author, an award-winning journalist, follows the rise and dramatic collapse of the multibillion-dollar startup that has resulted in intense litigation and lies to the FDA and the world.
Back to the **MNA Basics**

By Sarah-Grace Battles, MNA Communications Manager, and Sarah Pinder, MNA Engagement Director

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1 **LOG IN**

- Make sure you have your member username and password.
  - Check with your organization representative or use the “forgot my username/password” links on the member login page.
- Update your primary and secondary contact information on a regular basis to make sure that you are staying up-to-date with important information, including billing for your membership.

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2 **CONNECT WITH US**

**Sign up for our e-Newsletters!**

- **MI Nonprofit News** — Sent every two weeks, featuring the latest nonprofit news in Michigan.
- **Job Center** — Sent weekly, featuring job opportunities in the nonprofit sector.
- **Be Counted MI 2020 E-News** — Sent weekly, offering updates regarding the 2020 Census and the Michigan Nonprofit Complete Count Campaign.
- **Public Policy Action Alert** — Sent whenever there is breaking legislative news requiring action from the nonprofit sector.

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3 **ACCESS RESOURCES**

- Members can make the most of their membership and non-members can learn more by attending the MNA Member Orientation, a monthly, free webinar demonstrating member benefits and how to access them. The MNA Member Orientation is offered on the second Tuesday of every month at 3 p.m. (ET).
- Check out a full list of member benefits at [http://www.mnaonline.org/membership-benefits](http://www.mnaonline.org/membership-benefits)

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**IMPORTANT:** If you want to unsubscribe from one of our newsletters (don’t worry we aren’t offended), reach out to us! When you unsubscribe online, you are unintentionally unsubscribing from all of the newsletters as well as all future e-mail communications from MNA. In order to prevent this, please make sure you contact our Communications Manager at sgbattles@mnaonline.org so that she can assist you in updating your communication preferences.

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- **Instagram** — @mnaonline

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**By Sarah-Grace Battles, MNA Communications Manager, and Sarah Pinder, MNA Engagement Director**

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**LOG IN**

**CONNECT WITH US**

**ACCESS RESOURCES**
**Upcoming Events**

**Compensation Conversations**
*Tuesday, July 16th, 4:30-6:30 PM*  
*Detroit*

Join your nonprofit peers for networking and casual conversation on salaries and benefits in the nonprofit sector. Hear from MNA on trends found in the recently released Nonprofit Compensation & Benefit Report. This happy hour atmosphere will include snacks and limited drinks, for those that register in advance, thanks to Mutual of America.

**Talent Strategy Summit**
*Tuesday, August 27th, 9:00 AM-3:30 PM*  
*Royal Oak*

A premier event for nonprofit leaders who have an influence on employees’ performance in their organization. Discuss and learn how to work with and motivate people to thrive in inclusive and equitable ways. Leaders will gain insight on ways to shape and adapt their organization structure and culture to maximize staff performance. This premier event is a great opportunity to learn and share strategies to recruit, develop, and retain diverse talent. Attendees can expect to be part of high level discussions and gain immediate practical leadership skills.

For more information or to register visit [www.mnaonline.org/mna-calendar](http://www.mnaonline.org/mna-calendar).